

Message Text

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13-12

ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L 0089

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CZ

SUBJECT: NEW YEAR'S CEREMONY AT FOREIGN MINISTRY

1. FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK INVITED ALL PRAGUE CHIEFS OF MISSION TO A VIN D'HONNEUR AT THE CZERNIN PALACE ON JANUARY 12 TO MARK THE NEW YEAR. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME SUCH AN EVENT WAS HELD IN PRAGUE AND IT WAS CHNOUPEK'S PERSONAL INITIATIVE.

2. THE MINISTER'S REMARKS WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE FRIENDLY NATURE OF THE OCCASION, AND HAD MORE SPIRIT THAN SUBSTANCE. HE AGAIN TOOK UP THE MAJOR THEMES OF HIS NOVEMBER 11 FOREIGN POLICY ADDRESS TO THE
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FEDERAL ASSEMBLY, LAYING STRESS ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S

BURGEONING TIES WITH COUNTRIES ALL AROUND THE WORLD. HE ALSO TOOK PARTICULAR NOTE OF DEVELOPING US-SOVIET RELATIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. IN DISCUSSING CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S ACTIVE INTERNATIONALISM, HE SPOKE ABOUT THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND NOTED THE THREE ARENAS WHERE THE CZECHOSLOVAKS ARE CONCENTRATING THEIR EFFORTS NOW, NEW YORK, GENEVA, AND VIENNA. (IN THE LATTER CONNECTION, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER VEJVODA SPOKE TO THE CHARGE ABOUT PREPARATIONS FOR THE ECE MEETING IN GENEVA, WHICH HE SAID PRAGUE CONSIDERS IMPORTANT AS PART OF THE HELSINKI FOLLOW-UP.) THE DEAN (ROMANIAN AMB HAS) REPLIED ON BEHALF OF THE CORPS.

3. AFTER HEARING THE MINISTER'S SPEECH IN SLOVAK, THE CHARGE DISCUSSED IT WITH TWO OF CHNOUPEK'S PERSONAL STAFF, WHO ARE SLOVAKS, AND WHO WERE TALKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, NALEPKA, WHO ALSO HAPPENS TO BE SLOVAK. THE TWO STAFFERS SAID THAT SOME PEOPLE IN PRAGUE WERE WRONG IN SAYING NALEPKA DID NOT HAVE AN IMPORTANT SPOT BECUASE HE LACKED DEFINITE GEOGRAPHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES; IN FACT HE WAS OVER THE BUDGET AND MANY KINDS OF ECONOMIC AS WELL AS POLITICAL MATTERS, AND HAD CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT. THE CHARGE'S JOKING REMARKS ABOUT A SLOVAK MAFIA (A WORD WITH A SPECIAL HISTORY HERE, SINCE THOMAS MASARYK'S SUPPORTERS WERE ONCE CALLED "THE MAFFIA") WERE ONLY HALF IN JEST, FOR MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT CHNOUPEK IS PUTTING HIS OWN SPECIAL STAMP GRADUALLY UPON THE MINISTRY, AND THIS INCLUDES A GOOD DEAL OF SLOVAKISM.

4. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE CEREMONY CONTINUED THE SERIES OF EVENTS LATELY THAT HAVE SHOWN THE HUSAK REGIME'S INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND THE DESIRE TO STRESS CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S ACTIVITY (AND ACCEPTIBILITY) IN WORK AFFAIRS. (SOME AMBASSADORS PRESENT WERE PLEASED TO SEE THAT

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IN CONTRAST TO SOME OCCASIONS WHEN THE SOVIETS ARE SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT, THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WAS MERELY ONE OF THE CROWD.) THE OCCASION, BY THE WAY, TOOK PLACE IN THE SPLENDID QUARTERS THAT WERE PART OF JAN MASARYK'S APARTMENTS WHEN HE PERISHED IN THE DEFENESTRATION OF 1948. PERRY

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